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the ready excuse; but lack of inclination, resulting from careless reading habits, is very frequently the basis of the complaint. The large majority of American readers leave untouched the important volumes relating to the condition and government of our country; the critical views of thinking men on the exigencies of the Republic and the dangers that threaten the State. They thus reserve, until a period closely approaching a national crisis, that candid consideration of the great questions at issue which cannot be successfully entered into during the heat of a political contest. Unnoticed also are the excellent biographies which are so abundant. Attractive histories, powerful fiction, studies in political economy, the latest discoveries of the scientist, the development of art, and the upheaval and consequent progress in the religious world—all these are sealed treasures to the newspaper devotees.

Closed to him, moreover, are the riches of antiquity, the elegant pages of Virgil and Sophocles, the inspiring, rugged freshness of Æschylus and Homer, the simplicity of Chaucer, the thoughtful imagery of Milton. He eagerly drinks the lees, while the rich, sparkling wine is passed untasted.

The question becomes increasingly important with extended consideration. The citizens of the coming century are now being educated. The natural path of the son lies very close to that of his father. The exaggerated importance which so many attach to newspapers of the day will either decline or increase in the next generation. It has grown astonishingly within the past ten years; it is constantly increasing. Newspaper literature rarely stimulates thought and develops character. If the coming citizen is to be a well-balanced, thoughtful, strong man, his daily mental diet must consist of more substantial material than the ephemeral writings of the day.

Suppose that one-half of all the newsboys of New York were to be fitted out with clearly-printed vest-pocket editions of standard authors, which are now to be had at fabulously low prices, and to offer these for sale to the throng of weary workers on their way home from business. Perhaps a page of rich humor from Dickens, a stirring old border ballad from Scott, an inspiring page from the life of some self-made man, or a suggestive thought from one of Emerson's essays might be as interesting to the mind just released from the confinement in office or factory as the ordinary *pot-pourri* of the day's doings, and it would certainly be more elevating. Possibly the man who starts out for the day tired and dispirited with the hard struggle for existence would be as sensibly helped and fitted for his duties, if, having read the current news the evening before, he regaled himself with some of the choice thoughts of the great men of the world before the plunge into business life.

HELEN MARSHALL NORTH.

V.

WHY "MEMBER OF CONGRESS"?

WHY should a member of the House of Representatives be spoken of as a "Member of Congress"? It is a common custom; but is it certain that it is a good custom? Nothing can be plainer than that a member of the Senate is as much a member of Congress as a member of the lower house; yet a Senator is never so designated, and the absurdity of such a designation is patent. But is it not equally absurd to designate a Representative in this way?

The Constitution of the United States says that "the House of Representatives shall be composed of *members* chosen every second year," that "no person shall be a *Representative* who shall not have attained," etc., that "*Representatives* and direct taxes shall be apportioned," etc., that the "times, places, and manner of holding elections for Senators and *Representatives* shall be prescribed," etc., etc. It also says that "the Senate of the United States shall be composed of two *Senators* from each State," etc. There is nothing about "Members of Congress" in this venerable instrument except the statement quoted that "the House of Representatives shall be composed of members"; but the word "members" is here used in its ordinary acceptance, and surely no one can quote this expression as a justification of the common phrase, even though in the corresponding article relating to the Senate the word "*Senators*" (not "*members*") is employed.

Very possibly the origin of the indefensible phrase may be traced to the partially parallel usage in Great Britain, where members of the House of Commons are universally known as Members of Parliament. In strictness of language, members of the House of Lords are quite as much members of Parliament as those who sit in the Commons; indeed, they are more so, since they derive their right to sit there, not from the accident of an election, but from the circumstance of birth. But in England precedents are the only constitution, and custom is law. That does not make every custom good, especially when it is transported to another country. In connection with this very matter mark how the contraction "M. P." (Member of Parliament) has taken on the character of a substantive; so that it is the commonest thing in the world to say that a man is "an M. P.," or to speak of a group of members of the House of Commons as "those M. P's." There is one thing at least to be thankful for in this country—that is, that we have never acquired the habit of terming a Representative in Congress "an M. C." (though we do sometimes—not very often, fortunately—use the contraction), or of classing a number of them as "those M. C's."

"Congressman" or "Member of Congress" is the common method in the United States of designating an official who is really and constitutionally a Representative. "Congressman" is a bastard word, which, in spite of the fact that it has acquired a place in the dictionaries, has no more right in the language than such a coinage as "Parliamentman." It is wholly without justification or defence, and should be rigidly eschewed by all who are blessed with a feeling of respect for their mother-tongue. "Member of Congress" is hardly more defensible. Let us go back to the good old usage of the fathers, and call the men who sit in the more numerous branch of the Congress of the United States precisely what they are in both law and fact—simply Representatives.

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